

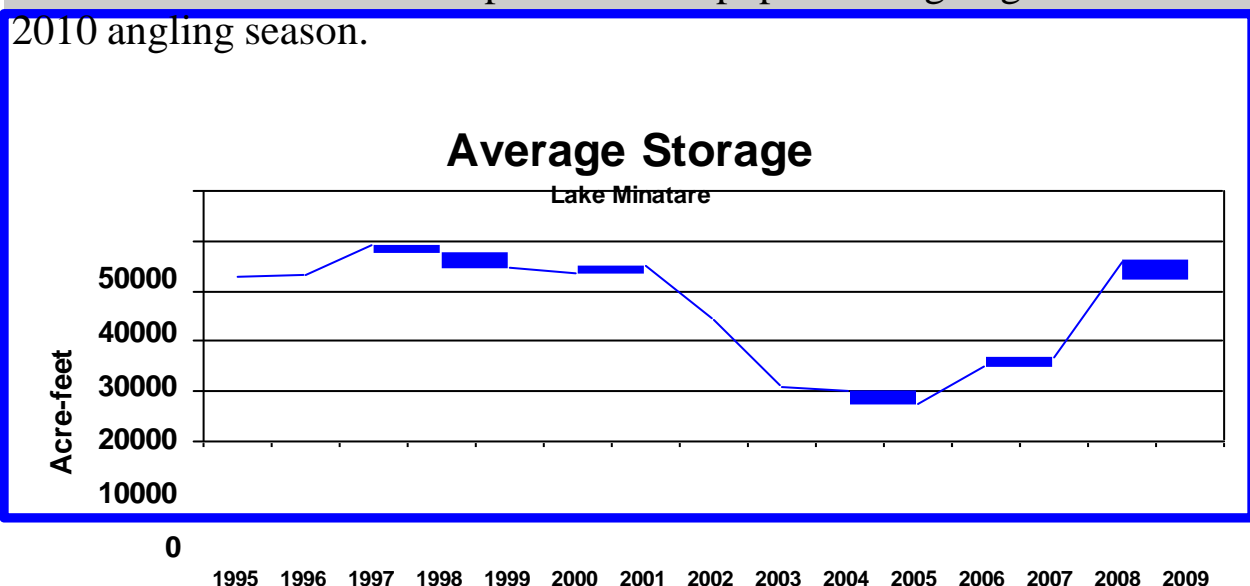
# Lake Minatare

## 2009 Fall Survey Summary

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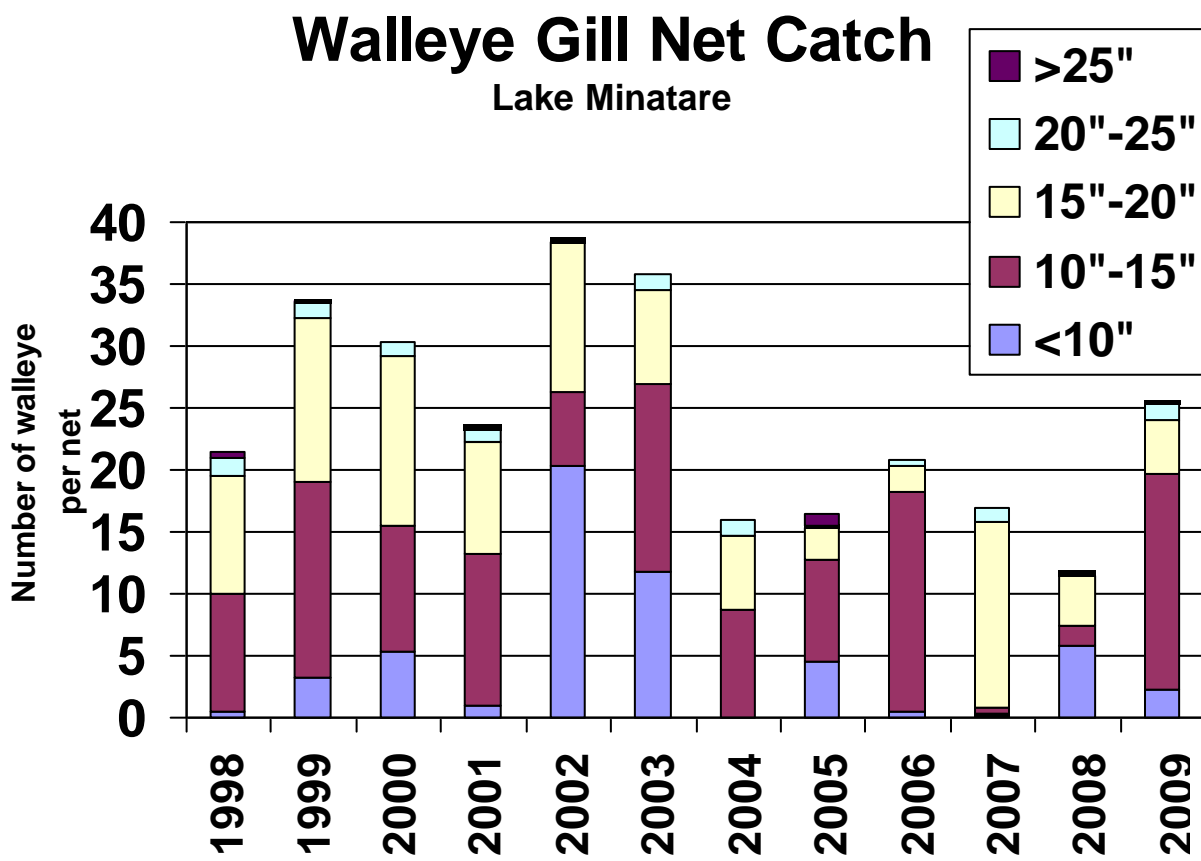
The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during October of 2009 at Lake Minatare. For comparative purposes they also show results from previous years. Fish populations have been sampled each fall at Lake Minatare using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish found in open-water, such as walleye, wiper, blue and channel catfish.

Water levels at Lake Minatare are currently (1/08/10) at 111% of average capacity and 55% of total storage capacity (32,363 acre-feet) at 1,693 surface acres. Average capacity over the past 30 years has been 30,336 acre-feet, or about 1,648 surface acres. Total storage capacity is 58,795 acre-feet or 2,147 surface acres. Lake Minatare enjoyed it's second consecutive above average water year in 2009. We look for this consistent water level to help bolster fish populations going into the 2010 angling season.



## Walleye

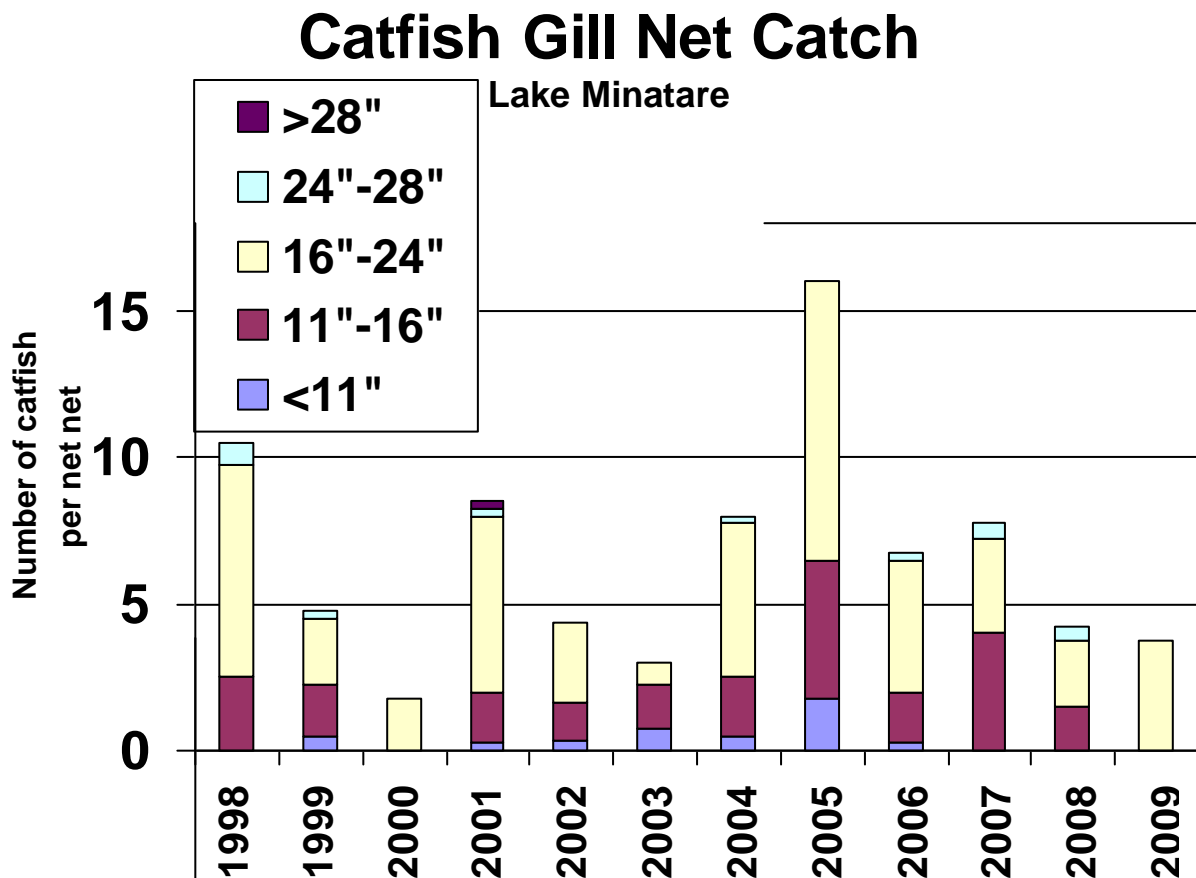
The walleye gill net catch in 2009 of 25.5 fish per net has finally caught up to our 10 year average of 23.6 per net. Low water levels the past six years have probably had an adverse affect on the overall walleye population at Lake Minatare but a strong gill net catch in 2009 is hopefully indicative of a returning walleye population that coincides with stable water levels. A very good 2008 year class will hopefully contribute to the fishery by reaching the 15 inch minimum mark by late summer. Nine different year classes were found in our fall gill netting effort and the average size of walleye sampled was over 14 inches. Lake Minatare will be stocked with walleye in 2010 with 50 fingerlings per acre and will continue to be stocked in the future contingent on water level conditions.



## Channel Catfish

Channel catfish catch rates have been very sporadic since 1998 with peaks in the fish population occurring every three to five years. This year's 3.7 fish per net rate is below the long term average of 6 fish per net at Lake Minatare. The average size of channel catfish sampled at Lake Minatare was right under a respectable 20 inches. During the past ten years, catfish anglers have enjoyed consistent numbers of channels available in that middle size group of 16"-24" with a chance at a few large fish over 10 pounds.

*Please take note of additional blue catfish information found on page 5.*

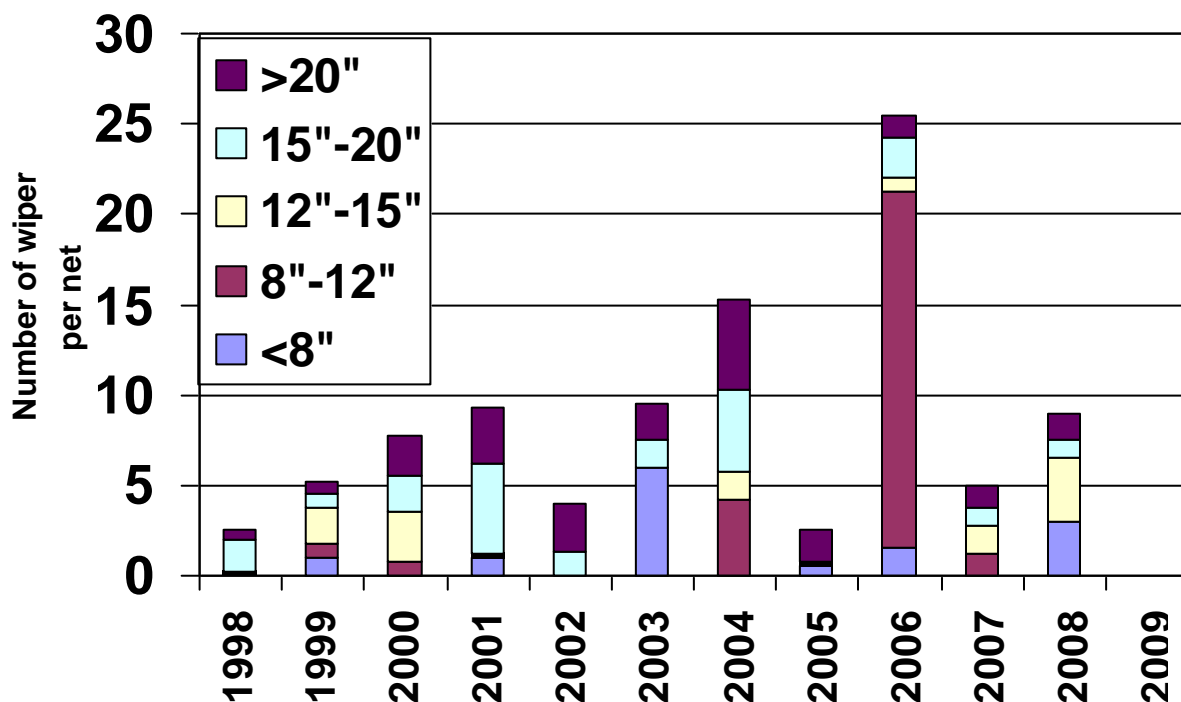


## Wipers

The fisheries crew did not sample one wiper during our fall netting survey in 2009. The schooling behavior of wipers make their capture with our sampling gear sometimes inconsistent, especially with water fluctuations that are evident in irrigation reservoirs. We feel that this sampling data was not representative of this overall trend data and anglers should expect similar results as past years. Wipers have been stocked annually in Lake Minatare since the mid 1990's and currently about 6500 fish go in the lake each year.

### Wiper Gill Net Catch

Lake Minatare



## **Additional Information:**

### **Blue Catfish**

Anglers should be aware that blue catfish were initially stocked in Lake Minatare in 2007 to add species diversity and a potential trophy fishery. We are requesting that blue catfish will again be stocked in the lake during the summer of 2010. The 2007 year class of blue catfish should be over 24 inches in length by 2010. It is the angler's responsibility to be able to differentiate species as different bag limits apply to both channel and blue catfish. Channel catfish have a bag limit of **10** fish in Lake Minatare and blue catfish are managed as a trophy fish statewide with a bag limit of **1**. Blue catfish will be stocked alternatively with channel catfish every other year based on hatchery availability. Please refer to page 8 of the 2010 Fishing Guide for a further description of catfish species in Nebraska.

### **Gizzard Shad**

Gizzard shad are the primary prey base for many Nebraska irrigation reservoirs. Because Lake Minatare sits on the northern edge of their geographic range in the High Plains, this prey species sometimes has a hard time surviving the cold winter season. Having adequate prey for many of our popular sport fish such as walleye, wipers, and channel catfish is a key component to their growth rates and survival from year to year. To ensure a good supply of prey fish are available in Lake Minatare, adult gizzard shad are stocked annually before the spawning season dependent on adequate water levels in the lake.

For additional information about fisheries management in the panhandle, please contact the NGPC Alliance office at 308-763-2940 or by email at the addresses listed below.

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